

GERMAN TOWNSHIP FIRE-RESCUE

PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEERS FAITHFULLY SERVING

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Driver selection

The driver selection process needs to include two general categories of review: human aspects and acquired abilities.

Age, Maturity And Experience

Not everyone can be or should be an emergency vehicle driver. The selection process for an emergency vehicle driver candidate is a critical part of the emergency vehicle response safety program. It should be recognized that age, maturity and experience are all different and not necessarily related. The maturity and experience are all different and not necessarily related. The following points should be considered in evaluating these three areas of concern:

- At 18 years old only maximum of 2 years driving experience
- At 21 years old only 3 years maximum emergency service experience
- Be aware of those individuals that get overly excited at either an emergency call or when lights and sirens are in use.
- Someone that is 30 years old may not have the emergency service experience or maturity necessary to keep their emotions in check when driving.

Driving Record

Making sure that the emergency vehicle drivers that are selected have good driving records is important from several perspectives. First of all it is an indication of whether or not a person has demonstrated respect for motor vehicle operations and laws.

Secondly, it is a protection for the person who will be authorizing the candidate to be an emergency vehicle driver for your organization. It is far better to have a fewer number of emergency vehicle drivers, than to have an emergency vehicle driver with a poor driving record.

Some control measures that may be taken are:

- Check motor vehicle records (MVRs) before person can even begin training
- Check MVRs on a on-going basis at least every three years
- Every year make photocopy of each emergency vehicle driver's, drivers license

Drivers Training And Education

Explain that specific emergency vehicle driver training is necessary because of the high stress, high visibility and high level of responsibility associated with driving an emergency vehicle. Emergency vehicle driver must include tasks and specific terms and knowledge not given in normal driver training and education programs. Any emergency vehicle driver training course needs to be enhanced by adding the following components.

Attitude

Need - We don't need driver training. All of us know how to drive and I've got a license to prove it.

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Laws – An understanding that most motor vehicle laws regarding emergency vehicles have not changed even though the environment in which driving must be accomplished has changed drastically.

Emergency vehicle drivers must understand that just because the law says one thing, does not assure that the motoring public will strictly abide by it. For example, most motor vehicle laws instruct public traffic to pull to the right upon the approach of an emergency vehicle. This may have been appropriate back in the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's when these laws were put on the books. In that time period most roads were of the two lane variety and to pull to the right was easy, safe and probably the only way to provide an emergency lane of traffic. Today it is not unusual to find even residential streets that have multiple driving lanes and turning lanes. Commercial districts, urban areas and feeder roads may have 4, 6, 8 or more lanes of traffic. It is no longer practical, realistic or even safe to have all traffic to pull to the right. Learn that they should not anticipate another driver to do one thing, and that there are options that if the emergency vehicle driver exercises them properly, can reduce the amount of risk taken. More times than not, a civilian vehicle driver will do one of two things upon the approach of an emergency vehicle; 1. stop exactly where he/she is, or 2; continue to go where they were going to begin with.

Response Efficiency

Understanding the task may be the most important attitude adjustment needed. Somewhere along the way emergency response was solely associated with speed in mph. While getting to the scene promptly is still important, the vehicle must get there period. Response efficiency cannot be measured in elapsed time from 0 to 60 mph but rather measured from time you leave station until the vehicle arrives safely on scene.

Knowledge

Legal terms

A thorough understanding of the legal terms and concepts that affect emergency vehicle response. Knowledge and understanding of specific terms, such as;

Due regard

Due regard for the safety of others means keeping the safety of others in mind when carrying out or performing a dutiful act.

Willful and wanton

Willful and wanton means intentional or with careless indifference (considered the most serious form of negligence)

Gross negligence

Gross negligence is reckless disregard of the consequences of acts to another person

Vicarious liability

Vicarious liability is legal liability placed on one person for the acts committed by another person

True emergency

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The definition of a true emergency is a situation in which there is a high probability of death or serious injury to an individual or significant property loss, and actions by an emergency vehicle driver may reduce the seriousness of the situation.

Right-of-way

Understanding that being given the right-of-way and having the right-of-way are two entirely different things.

Physical forces

Understanding how the laws of physics play a part in driving and how different the effects are when the size of the vehicle increases. There is a significant difference in the handling characteristics between a 3,200 lb. Pumper. Physical forces influence the amount of control the emergency vehicle driver may possess. If the limits are not exceeded the operator can fully control the speed and direction of the emergency vehicle. If boundaries are exceeded control will be lost. Actions that influence lost control are:

- Too fast for road/weather conditions.
- Acceleration too hard.
- Braking inappropriately
- Changing direction too abruptly.
- Tracking a curve at too high a rate of speed.

Administrative and Tactical Operating Guidelines

Backing

Backing is made hazardous by the fact that the driver cannot see much of where he/she intends to go. The safest way to backup a vehicle is not to back it up at all. Whenever possible avoid backing. When it is necessary to back-up the following measures should be taken.

Circle Of Safety

Before attempting to back the emergency vehicle driver will make a circle of safety to see that all equipment is secured and that all compartment doors are securely closed and any physical obstructions moved out of the way. The emergency vehicle driver should also note all potential obstructions in the intended path of travel

Spotters

A policy should be in place that requires the use of trained spotters. Both emergency vehicle drivers and non-drivers should be trained on how to safely position themselves so that the emergency vehicle driver can see them and also instructed on the use of standardized hand signals.